brought into the school, including two adults. These latter had been brought into Dalwallinu in a load of roots and were only found when the root was chopped. One skink had been injured, having a two-inch cut in the abdominal wall. It was kept at school for treatment. The skink responded to chloroform by going almost immediately into a state of semi-consciousness but it was difficult to induce a complete anaesthesia. The injury was repaired with the aid of some fishing line and adhesive tape and the skink appeared more alert after the operation. It was released at a later date but was not seen again.

My science teacher asked me to release the healthy adult skink where I had previously found the young lizards on my farm. The lizard was very fat in appearance and proved to be a gravid female. A young was born on August 12 and measured 10.8 cm. At the first opportunity, when the young was three days old, I brought them to school on the school bus. The young one was then weighed and measured. It was 11 cm in length and weighed 15.5 gm. Subsequently I took the skinks back home but before I was able to release them the young lizard disappeared. About three weeks later my mother found it in the passage of our house. I was hoping to do some more research on it but coincident with the re-appearance of the lizard was the appearance of a tick on my father. The skink got the blame and my mother ordered its immediate release.

—ROBERT NANKIVELL, Dalwallinu District High School.
(Year 9 Student).

Adult female *Egernia stokesii* with newly born young.

Predation on *Stigmodera (Themoguatha) tibialis* by a fly.—The following observations were made on March 2, 1975, while we were collecting insects feeding on the flowers of *Eucalyptus foecunda* on Balladonia Station, W.A. near Afghan Rock (lat. 32°22' S, 123°40 E). At about 10.45 a.m. western standard time, we saw a large specimen of a *Stigmodera (Themoguatha)* species fly into a clump of eucalyptus flowers 9 m above ground level at the top of a flowering tree. Some 15 minutes later in the same tree we noticed that a large beetle was suspended, apparently by one of its elytra, from a small branch underneath the blossom some 8 m above ground level. On closer inspection we saw that the beetle was being held by a large Asilid fly which was feeding on it. The fly was in a vertical position with its head down and was feeding on the beetle which it held vertically, also

in a head-down position. The feeding site appeared to be in the fold between the pro and meso-thorax. We did not observe the capture of the prey by the fly but assumed the prey to be the same beetle seen earlier flying into the tree, as this was the only large Buprestid observed in that area. We watched feeding progress for 3¼ hours hoping that the predator would eventually drop its prey and in post-prandial stupor fly to within net-reach. Eventually when time was running short we collected both prey and predator by the only method open to us, namely by shooting with a shotgun. Both specimens were somewhat damaged but still identifiable (Plate 1). The prey was identified as a female *Stigmodera (Themognatha) tibialis* Waterhouse, easily recognised by the tibial spur on the second leg and the predator by comparison with identified material in the South Australian Museum as a male *Phellus piliferus* D & F. We think the observation of interest as we are unaware of published reports of predation occurring on any of the large *Stigmodera* species.

We wish to thank Mrs. A. E. Crocker and family of Balladonia Station for permission to collect on their property; Mr. G. F. Gross of the South Australian Museum for assistance in identifying the fly; the W.A. Herbarium for identifying the tree. One of us (S.B.) gratefully acknowledges a grant-in-aid of research from the Australian Biological Resources Committee which made this work possible.

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Fig. 1.—Left, predator *Phellus piliferus;* right, prey *Stigmodera (Themognatha) tibialis.*